

Apocalyptic politics

The workshop on 'Apocalyptic Politics, Archaic Myths and Modern Media', organised in London by the Centre on 28 March 2006, explored the tendency of ideologues in both East and West to see politics as an apocalyptic conflict between good and evil. The aim was to bring together academic researchers and political analysts to debate the alleged 'clash of civilisations' and the idea of fighting a 'crusade' against a 'demonic enemy'.

The author Marina Warner delivered an eloquent illustrated lecture on 'The Culture of Apocalypse', analysing the revival of images of destruction from the Book of Revelation in the discourse of political leaders like George Bush and Tony Blair, as well as in cult films like *The Lord of the Rings*. Who, she asked, are the 'Orcs' of modern politics – the 'evil empire' that must be destroyed? Does

the 'disembodied eye' of the movie camera invite a callous acceptance of violence, provided it is inflicted on 'others'?

A second lecture on 'Nationalism, Religion and Myth in Iranian Politics' by Ali Ansari reminded us that apocalyptic thinking is not confined to the Judeo-Christian tradition. President Ahmadinejad of Iran has proclaimed the imminent return of the Mahdi, the saviour who (in Islamic tradition) will sweep away the evils of the world. Politicians may denounce 'the global ideology of Islamic extremism', but Dr Ansari argued for a differentiated approach based on original Arabic and Persian sources. Rather than demonising Iran, we should acknowledge the debates taking place between different factions.

Later the focus switched to 'Nationalist Myths and Modern Media in Post-Soviet Russia', introduced by Dr Stella Rock, who highlighted the lobbying power of Orthodox fundamentalists and the various apocalyptic myths they circulate. While acknowledging these trends, her discussant Professor John Klier questioned their significance for mainstream Russian politics. This was followed by a session on 'National Identity and Political Debate in Germany and Austria', introduced by Professor Edward Timms, who focused on media discourses that perpetuate the memory of Germany's Nazi past. He also stressed the successes of the post-war German and Austrian republics, by contrast with the failed experiments of the inter-war period. His discussant Dr Lars Rensmann showed how the discourse of

'victimhood' has functioned in public memory of the Second World War, first in Austria and more recently in Germany, citing the film about the bombing of Dresden. But he concluded that traditional nationalism is being modified by the claims of multiculturalism.

During the concluding Panel Discussion, a spirited defence of the media was undertaken by Hella Pick, former Diplomatic Editor of the *Guardian*, who stressed the importance of new information technologies. The move towards more personal and interactive forms like the weblog was also welcomed by Professor James Miller. And the workshop ended on an optimistic note with the insistence by John Klier that myths may provide a source of social cohesion, while the 'European project' encourages international cooperation.

The workshop, coordinated by Stella Rock and Edward Timms, was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Participants were welcomed by Professor Naomi Segal, Director of the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, which hosted the event at the University of London Senate House. It marked the launch of *Nationalist Myths and Modern Media: Contested Identities in the Age of Globalisation* (I B Tauris, 2006), a thought-provoking volume of conference papers edited by Jan Herman Brinks, Stella Rock and Edward Timms. Participants received a presentation copy of the Centre's most recent research paper, 'Nationalist Myth-Making in the Post-Soviet Media: An Overview' by Stella Rock.



Marina Warner (photo by Bettina Weichert)

Centre's founder honoured



At an investiture at Buckingham Palace on 13 December 2005, the founder of the University of Sussex Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Professor Edward Timms, was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to scholarship. The investiture was conducted by the Prince of Wales, who expressed a lively interest of the Centre's research on the experiences of the refugees of the 1930s, recalling his own meetings with members of the *Kindertransport*. In addition to his daughter Daphne and his grandson Jamie, Professor Timms was accompanied to the ceremony by the Centre's long-serving Administrative Liaison Officer, Diana Franklin.

After the ceremony Clemens Nathan, a member of the Centre's Support Group, hosted an informal lunch at the Athenaeum. This provided an opportunity to reflect on the creative partnership established during the past dozen years between the University and the Support Group, under the chairmanship first of Max Kochmann and now of Peter Straus. The achievements of the Centre would scarcely have been possible without the Group's sustained encouragement and enterprising fund-raising. The Friends of the Centre have also provided invaluable support, helping to inspire a wide-ranging programme of research on the achievements of German-Jewish refugees.

*Diana Franklin and Edward Timms
at Buckingham Palace
(photo by Charles Green)*

Investing in excellence

The Directorship of the Centre fell vacant in October 2005, when Dr Raphael Gross resigned his post in order to take up a new appointment as Director of the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt. Since then Diana Franklin has been Pro-Tem Director, sustaining the Centre's momentum in teaching and research, ably assisted by Chana Moshenska and other colleagues. The search for a new Director was put on hold while the University reviewed its priorities, developing a programme of 'Investing in Excellence' that was formally approved by the Senate in March 2006.

Early in April this programme was announced in *The Guardian* and the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES). 'The University of Sussex,' the advertisement began, 'is one of the UK's leading research universities, ranked in the THES top 100

world universities. As part of the new strategic plan at Sussex, we are embarking on a programme of academic renewal, investing over £4 million in up to 75 academic posts in identified areas of excellence'. The first phase of these key appointments includes the following:

Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies (five-year fixed term)

We are seeking an experienced university teacher with a strong record of research and publication in this field. You will

provide academic leadership for the Centre and develop its external engagement. Candidates will also be asked to demonstrate a record of academic innovation and success in winning research grants. The successful applicant will be a member of the Department of History and will teach undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

The closing date for applications was 30 April, and an announcement about the new appointment will be made in due course.

Holocaust awareness

The highlight of Holocaust Memorial Day, held at Sussex on 25 January, was a presentation by Eva Clarke, whose parents were deported from Prague via Terezin to Auschwitz. A packed auditorium listened in silence to her gripping story, illustrated by striking documents and photographs. Eva's father was shot at Auschwitz in January 1945, when the camp was abandoned by the Nazis. By that date her mother was working as a slave labourer in an armaments factory, concealing the fact that she was pregnant. Arriving exhausted in Mauthausen in April 1945, she gave birth to her daughter Eva, just three days before the Americans arrived. This narrative of courage under conditions of unimaginable hardship was followed by a documentary film entitled *The Optimists*, which reconstructed the achievements of rescuers in Bulgaria, the ally of Nazi Germany that most effectively resisted the planned genocide of the Jews.

Five years ago, when the Centre initiated its annual commemoration of the Holocaust, the programme was confined to a single day. This year, thanks largely to Chana Moshenska, our Director of Educational Programmes, it formed part of a Holocaust Awareness Week, hosted by the city of Brighton & Hove. On 27 January there was a screening of Sue Read's powerful film *Hiding from Hitler*, reconstructing the survival of children hidden from the Nazis. The week culminated in a programme on 'Trauma and Memory in the Twentieth

Century', jointly organized by the German-Jewish Centre and the Centre for Life History Research. There were talks by Graham Dawson on 'Making Peace in the Irish Troubles' and by Lynn Smith on oral history recordings underlying her book *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*. The climax was a presentation by Helen Bamber, founder of the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture, whose career extends from nursing survivors at Bergen-Belsen to advising the British government about asylum seekers today.

Freud, archives and legacies



Image of Oedipus and the Sphinx

To mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, the Centre hosted a half-day workshop at the University of Sussex Meeting House on 10 May, coordinated by Chana Moshenska and Edward Timms. The programme began with a paper by Ken Robinson (Newcastle upon Tyne), Honorary Archivist of the British Psychoanalytical Society, on 'The Emigration of Psychoanalysts to Britain, 1933-1939'. After analysing documents, which chart the attempts of Ernest Jones to help colleagues escape the Nazi regime, this paper highlighted their impact on the development of psychoanalysis in Britain.

The second paper, by Professor Laura Marcus (Sussex), focused on a narrative written by one of Freud's patients, Hilda Doolittle's *Tribute to Freud*. This text, by the American author usually known as H. D., provides the basis for

further reflections on the relationship between psychoanalysis and cinema. The impact of Freud's ideas in France forms a further important dimension of his legacy, analysed in a third paper by Professor Naomi Segal (London), entitled 'The Other French Freud: Didier Anzieu – The Story of a Skin'. This paper suggests that conceptions of the body may be as significant for psychoanalysis as the traditional preoccupation with the unconscious.

The programme, designed to appeal both to specialists and to those with a general interest in the wider implications of psychoanalysis, was open to Friends of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies free of charge. The event attracted a large and lively attendance, confirming the enduring value of Freud's legacy.

News in brief

Dr Lisa Silverman, holder of the Kohn Foundation Research Fellowship at the Centre in 2004-5, has been appointed Associate Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee. Her research profile was enhanced by the work she undertook at the Centre on Jewish women photographers.

Petru Weber, holder of a research studentship at the Centre from 2002 to 2005, has been awarded a DPhil for his dissertation on 'Regime Changes, Public Memory and the Pursuit of Justice: The Case of German-Speaking Jews in Bukovina, 1920-1960'. The examiners praised his 'admirable breadth of research and maturity of judgment'.

Congratulations to Deborah Schultz and her husband Lucian on the birth of their daughter Clara on 19 October 2005. Returning from maternity leave, Deborah has resumed her work on the Daghani Collection, supported by a grant from the Claims Conference.

Further congratulations to Samira Teuteberg and her partner Kevin Bacon on the birth of their son Bruno in January 2006. After maternity leave, Samira returns to full-time work on the BARGE project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Andrea Hammel, who is both a Research Fellow for the BARGE project and a Lecturer at the Sussex Language Institute, has become a member of the editorial board of the *Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, published by Rodopi (Amsterdam).

On 12 January 2006 Edward Timms gave a lecture at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna on 'Karl Kraus und der Aufstieg der Hakenkreuzler'. On 28 February he gave a talk on 'Jewish Motifs in the Paintings of Felix Nussbaum' to the Brighton & Hove Jewish Historical Society; and 7 March a further talk on 'Religious Motifs in the Work of Karl Kraus' at the Progressive Synagogue, Hove to a meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews.

Recent publications

Nationalist Myths and Modern Media: Contested Identities in the Age of Globalization, ed. **Jan Herman Brinks**, **Stella Rock** and **Edward Timms**, London: I B Tauris, 2006

"Verfolgt – Gezeichnet": Der Maler Arnold Daghani, ed. Helmut Braun and **Deborah Schultz**, Springe: zu Klampen Verlag, 2006

Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus und der Kampf ums Recht* (Wiener Vorlesungen) Vienna: Picus Verlag, 2006

Timms, 'Karl Kraus's Adaptations of Offenbach: The Quest for the Other Sphere' in *Austrian Studies*, vol. 13 (2005), ed. Judith Beniston and Robert Vilain, pp. 92-108

Timms, 'Kafka, Kraus und das jüdische Theater', in *Die Vielfalt im Leben Franz Kafkas*, ed. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler and Norbert Winkler, Vienna: Vitalis, 2005, pp. 258-76

Timms, 'Creative Synergies: Charlotte Salomon and Alfred Wolfsohn' in *Reading Charlotte Salomon*, ed. Michael Steinberg and Monica Bohm-Duchen, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006, pp. 105-13

Timms, 'Between Berlin and Vienna: Approaches to Austro-German Intellectual History' in *European History Quarterly*, vol. 36 (1), January 2006, pp. 101-7

Andrea Hammel, 'Online Database of British Archival Resources Relating to German-Speaking Refugees, 1933-1950: Ein Projektbericht' in *Kinder und Jugendliche im Exil: Exilforschung (Ein Internationales Jahrbuch)*, ed. Inge Hansen-Schaberg, vol. 24, Munich: edition text + kritik

Hammel, 'Jack Pritchard, Refugees from Nazism and Isokon Design' in *Cultural transfer at the Time of the Third Reich. Patronage and Exile* (Mittel- und Osteuropastudien), ed. Andrew Chandler, Katarzyna Stoklosa and Jutta Vinzent. Münster: LIT Verlag

Hammel, 'The Kaleidoscope of Elsewhereness in Women's Exile Writing: Martina Wied's "Das Krähenest" and Anna Gmeyer's "Cafe du Dome"' in *Exile and Otherness: Exile Studies*, ed. Alexander Stephan, vol. 11, Berne: Peter Lang Verlag

Complimentary copies of the following publication, which reviews the propaganda of religious fundamentalists and the persistence of anti-semitic myths, are available to Friends of the Centre on request:

Stella Rock, 'Nationalist Myth-Making in the Post-Soviet Media: An Overview' (Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Research Paper No. 5)

For further information about the Centre, including the autumn Lecture Series in London to be organised jointly with the Leo Baeck Institute and the Frankfurt Jewish Museum, please contact:

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